

PRIMITIVE FORMS AND FIGURES IN ÇANAKKALE CERAMICS¹

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ABSTRACT

The Ottoman art of ceramic production extending from the 14th to 20th century nurtured from three centres such as İznik, Kütahya, and Çanakkale. Çanakkale, one of these centres, as compared to others, is distinguished from others through the primitive attitude in technique, form and designs, which is considered as “folk art”. Animal shaped forms such as lion, horse, camel and kangaroo in the traditional Çanakkale ceramics from the end of the 18th century to the first quarter of the 20th century fulfilled functions such as trinkets, box or candy box, or ashtray. The disproportion of these ceramics can sometimes be attributed to the practical attitude of the craftsmen, and sometimes to their wish to give a “funny” impression. On the other hand, as in many products of folk art, it is possible to observe forms and designs from prehistoric ages extending to the 20th century in Çanakkale ceramics. This surprising continuity can be explained by referring to the fact that production, independent of the “official” art of the period, continued by transfer from the master to the apprentice, without feeling the historical obligation. In this article, we will introduce interesting examples of past forms and designs in Çanakkale ceramics located in various museums and private collections and we will deal with their projections today.

Key Words: Ottoman, Çanakkale, ceramic.

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ÇANAKKALE SERAMİKLERİNDE PİRİMİTİF FORM VE FİGÜRLER

ÖZET

14. yüzyıldan 20.yüzyıla uzanan Osmanlı seramik sanatı İznik, Kütahya, Çanakkale olmak üzere belli başlı üç merkezden beslenmiştir. Bu merkezlerden Çanakkale, diğerlerine oranla "halk sanatı" kapsamına giren, teknik, biçim ve desenlerindeki primitif yaklaşımla diğerlerinden ayrılır.18.yüzyılın ortalarından 20. yüzyıl ortalarına kadar süregelen geleneksel Çanakkale seramiklerinde, aslan, at, deve, ayı gibi hayvan biçimli formlar bazen sadece biblo, bazen de kutu, şekerlik, küllük gibi fonksiyonlara sahiptirler. Bu seramiklerde oranların bozukluğu kimi zaman zanaatkârların pratiğinden, bazen de "komik" bir izlenim verebilmek arzusundan kaynaklandığı düşünülebilir. Öte yandan, birçok halk sanatı üretimlerinde olduğu gibi, Çanakkale seramiklerinde Tarih Öncesi'nden 20.yüzyıla ulaşan formlara ve desenlere rastlanmaktadır. Bu şaşırtıcı süreklilik, üretimin, dönemin "resmi" sanatından bağımsız olarak, ustadan çırağa aktarılarak herhangi bir tarihselci kaygı olmaksızın devam etmesiyle açıklanabilir. Bu makalede çeşitli müzelerde ve özel koleksiyonlarda yer alan Çanakkale seramiklerinden geçmiş form ve desenlerle ilgisi bulunan ilginç örnekler tanıtılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı, Çanakkale,- seramik.

Çanakkale, which was one of the most important ceramic production centres during the Ottoman Era, is located in the Northwestern Anatolia, and on the South coast of the strait called Çanakkale (Dardanelles) that connects the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The parts of ceramics that were shaped with hand and grindstone and found in excavations carried out in the archaeological sites within the limits of the city whose foundation dates back to 3000's BC which proves that ceramics were produced in this region since the Antiquity. The production of ceramics there continued in the Roman and Byzantine eras (Ayda 1997: 374). After the city was conquered by Turks, during the Beylik (Karesioğulları) period, there were ceramic workshops but these workshops could not compete with the workshops in İznik and had to close down. With the descend of the workshops in İznik in the 17th century, Kütahya ceramics gained importance, and since the end of the 17th century, ceramic production in Çanakkale revived again. Ceramic products with underglaze and overglaze painting techniques and red paste produced in these workshops introduced a new dimension in Anatolian ceramic art in terms of technique, form and design. These ceramics which were brought under spotlight in terms of art in the recent periods spread outside Anatolia through commerce as Çanakkale was a port city and they were introduced into foreign collections. Çanakkale ceramics have developed in two styles in terms of design and form. Among them, plates, bowls and jar shaped works produced between 18th and the 19th centuries, are foregrounded through their quality workmanship and creative linear compositions. Since the mid-19th century, despite the increasing colour and form diversity, some exaggerated forms of ceramics which were considered to be "kitsch" were produced².

Within the scope of this article, we will rather concentrate on this second group. We will touch upon the fact that these ceramics have strong ties with ceramic production traditions that have continued since the prehistoric ages in Anatolia and this fact will be explained through examples. For example, besides the stylised plant compositions done on cream colour lining which we observe in 18th century plates and bowls with brushstrokes, it is not difficult to observe that the descriptions with sailboats, mosques, kiosks and animals are contributed to the continuity of linear or stylised manner painting tradition done in painting on the lining used since the neolithical age in Anatolia. This style which we observe in red and black animal and human figures made with clay or madder in paintings in caves and walls in Deraser (Arık) in Batman³ in Eastern Anatolia, Burdur / Hacılar and Konya / Çatalhöyük (Fig. 1-2), continued in different iconographical senses in Byzantine and Seljuk ceramics and used for decorative purposes in Kütahya and Çanakkale ceramics. Except for the decorations that are over linear and stylized manner used, the real fact that strengthens the ties of Çanakkale ceramics with the past is the forms that are used. The deep bowls in Istanbul University Feyhaman Duran Culture and Art Centre and Antalya Suna & Inan Kırac Kaleiçi Museum are some of the proofs indicating the continuity of the tradition of form and design that started with primitive painted ceramics.

² See: Öney 1971; Altun, Akalın, Demirsar Arlı and Yılmaz 1996.

³ See: Soydan and Korkmaz 2013: 665-686.

When compared with similar ones, these bowls can be dated to the 18th century and they a flat bottom, sharp edges, and they are decorated in reddish brown colour on beige lining inside and outside (Fig. 3 a, b, c).

The pot dated to the second half of 6 thousand BC found in Burdur / Hacilar can be given as an example for pots in similar forms with decoration of painting technique on lining we observe since the Neolithic period in Anatolia. The striking similarity between the pot, which was produced in Çanakkale in the 19th century and the one found in Assos ancient city within the city limits of Çanakkale is quite interesting in this context (Ayda 1997: 374). Both of these pots are with double handle with a relief of snake in the body part (Fig. 4 a, b). It is observed that jug forms with beaks and ring shaped body unearthed during excavations conducted in Çanakkale environs and many other regions of Anatolia, were produced by introducing colour and decoration interpretations that are characteristics of Çanakkale ceramics since the 19th century (Fig. 5 a,b,c ; 6 a,b,c).

Besides, it is possible to draw similarities between the pots with reliefs of human face as we observed in the past (Fig. 7 a,b), the vessels and jugs some of which are in animal form or were applied animal figures, and the works produced since the mid-19th century. For instance an early example for the jugs which were enriched in only one part with animal forms was unearthed in Kayseri / Kültepe. The nipple of this jug, which was dated to the 18th century BC, is in animal form. It is possible to observe jugs in similar forms in later periods in the ceramics of Syria, Iraq and Iran, which are the neighbours of Anatolia. Another similar jug produced in Çanakkale, is on display in Antalya Suna & Inan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum. The nipple of this jug which is dated to the beginning of the 20th century is in the shape of a rooster (Fig. 8 a,b).

Besides the jugs which are classified as horse-headed and bird-headed produced at the end of the 19th century or the beginning of the 20th century, the primitive examples of applique practice in animal form which we observe in other ceramics in different forms were unearthed in various excavations. Another example of the ceramic jug in this style that dates back to the 19th century BC, was unearthed in Kayseri / Kültepe (Fig. 9 a,b). Besides, especially some of the jugs in horse-head form are significant because of the fact that they represent the multifaceted interaction in the reliefs that can be associated with the figure of the double-headed eagle on the front faces of their bodies which are used frequently as it represented domination and protection against evil in iconographical terms in Turkish Seljuks period and in the previous periods (Fig. 10-11).

Among the Çanakkale ceramics that are dated to the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, there are ceramics that are produced in different shapes as well as the ones in animal and human form. It is observed that these ceramics produced for functional purposes such as ornamentation, water vessel, sugar vessel, gas lamp, were inspired by various ceramics along history such as drinking vessels (askos), idols, toys, and whistles, etc. (Fig. 12 a, b; 13 a, b). The most striking examples of this period for Çanakkale ceramics are

the ones in animal form such as lion, horse, kangaroo, camel which are shaped in the highly stylised manner. Most of these pots in animal forms produced by using barbotine (applique) technique in eye, mouth and nose details are ornamented with reliefs in flowers and rosette. For ceramics in stylised animal forms produced in all periods for ages, the dog figurine dated to 1st to 3th centuries BC, of the Northern Chinese Khan Dynasty in the London Victoria & Albert Museum collection and cavalryman toys which are believed to belong to the 1st century BC and 1st century AD and are on display in Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations based on similarities with Çanakkale ceramics in terms of style (Fig. 14 a,b,c).

As stated above, there are many similarities between these ceramics which are produced as water vessels as well as knickknacks and the drinking vessels in different forms of prehistoric periods in terms of form and style. For example in the drinking vessel shaped like a kneeling antelope belonging to the mid-6th century BC, the body of the antelope is thick considering the function of the vessel but the legs are not proportional to the body. Water vessels shaped like kneeling camels produced in Çanakkale are noteworthy because of the similarity with this example in terms of lack of proportion between legs and body as well as in terms of stance (Fig. 15 a,b). Besides, some animal-shaped ceramics of this group have handles we observe in drinking vessels used in the Antiquity (Fig. 16 a,b).

Underlined once again based on this exemplification, it is possible to explain the reason why Çanakkale ceramics which are nurtured by the primitive folk arts of the geographical location in which it is situated, are so passionate, based on the fact that as ceramic masters had to produce rapidly, they had to produce without having to follow certain moulds of patterns. In fact this attitude which we observe in all folk arts, is also valid for the primitive period masters that produced without being bothered to produce works of art to meet the needs. Today there are a few workshops that produce ceramics in the traditional sense in Çanakkale. Because of the masters immigrating at the end of 19th century and in the first quarter of the 20 century transferred the tradition of Çanakkale type ceramics to future generations and this tradition is still preserved in some Aegean islands (Korre and Zaprachou 2008; Çizer 2008; Karagül 2013) (Fig. 17). Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University and Çanakkale Ceramic Factory have made significant contribution to the introduction of this art and its transfer to later generations. For example, the statue of horse-headed pot located in the city centre today that represent Çanakkale ceramics was produced in Çanakkale Ceramic Factory (Tekkök 2011) (Fig. 18). In addition to measures for preserving the traditional production, Çanakkale ceramics, as we observe in Feyhaman Duran's paintings, have been used in contemporary Turkish art of painting compositions (Fig. 19 a, b). However, what is striking in terms of continuity of the forms that are associated with Çanakkale ceramics, are also used in contemporary Turkish ceramic art (Küçükbiçmen 2007). Among the artists in whose works of contemporary interpretation we observe horse-head pots, round pots and horse shaped vessels are Erdinç Bakla, Esin Küçükbiçmen, Ayşe Künelgin, Tüzüm Kızılcan, Onur Öztürk, and Mustafa Pilevneli, etc. (Fig. 20 a, b, c).

Finally we would like to summarise the story of design and form of Çanakkale ceramics which extend from prehistoric ages to the present by quoting the following words of Bedrettin Cömert (1981: 227);

“...the act of creating; is not, of course, a, pure, abstract process. The product of art is not produced through the creating skill of a person in isolation. This work is formed based on the interior and exterior contributions accumulated with the experiments man finds in his environment throughout his life. Naturally we observe influence among these contributions. Each work of art is certainly based on sample-products that have been created by referring to the past, whether they deny the past or accept it. However, through such a historical basis you can quit the past and tradition and gain new characteristics that can form a new tradition...”

Çanakkale ceramic masters, as specified by Cömert above, have established strong ties with the past examples, but instead of simply copying them, they mixed it with folk art and created a brand new tradition.

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Fig.1 Prehistoric Cave Paintings of Deraser. (Soydan and Korkmaz 2013)



Fig.2 Wall Painting, Çatalhöyük, BC 6000. (Soydan (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations))



Fig.3 a. Bowl, Ankara, Hacilar, BC 6000, (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
b. Bowl, (Istanbul University, Collection of the Feyhman Duran Culture and Art House, Fot. Ö. Erol).
c. Bowl, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kırac Kaleiçi Museum).



Fig. 4 a. Pot, BC. 5th cc, (Çanakkale Museum), (Ayda 1997).
b. Pot, (Ankara Ethnography Museum), (Ayda 1997).



Fig. 5 a. Jug, BC 3000 (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
 b. Jug, (Istanbul University, Collection of the Feyhaman Duran Culture and Art House, Fot. Ö. Erol).
 c. Jug, (Istanbul Tiled Kiosk Museum).



Fig. 6 a. Ring-Shaped Jug, Boğazköy, BC 16000, (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
 b. Ring-Shaped Jug, (İstanbul, Tiled Kiosk Museum).
 c. Ring-Shaped Jug, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kırac Kaleiçi Museum).



Fig. 7 a. Pots with Reliefs of Human Face, BC mid 3000, (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
b. Vase Bearing Atatürk Face Mask, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum).



Fig. 8 a. Animal Nipple Shaped Jug, BC 19th cc. (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations)
b. Jug, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum).



Fig. 9 a. Jug, Kültepe, BC 19th cc, (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
b. Jug, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum).
c. Jug, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum).



Fig. 10 Horse-Head Jug.
(Antalya Suna & İnan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum)



Fig. 11 Kubadabad Tile, Turkish Seljuks Period.
(Arık 2000)



Fig. 12 a. Pot, BC early 3000, (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
b. Spice Box, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum).

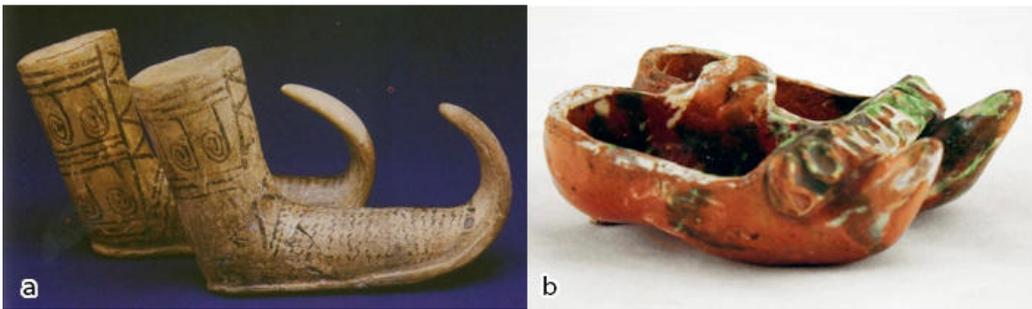


Fig. 13 a. Askos, BC 19th cc, (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
b. Shoe-Shaped Spice Box, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum).



Fig.14 a. Toys, (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
b. Dog Figurine, (London Victoria & Albert Museum).
c. Horse-Shaped Cup, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum).



Fig.15 a. Askos, Hacilar, BC 6000, (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
b. Camel- Shaped Cup, (Antalya Suna & İnan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum).



Fig.16 a. Askos, Beycesultan, BC 18.-17th. cc. (Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations).
b. Bird-Shaped Cup (Private Collections).



Fig.17 Animal-Shaped Cup, (Çizer 2008).



Fig.18 The Statue of Horse-Headed Pot.



Fig.19 a. Feyhaman Duran, Still Life, (Demirsar Arlı, 2004).
b. Jar, (Istanbul University, Collection of the Feyhaman Duran Culture and Art House, Fot. Ö. Erol).



Fig. 20 a. Erdinç Bakla, (1970), (www.erdincbakla.com)
b. Onur Öztürk (<http://mfkaragul.blogspot.com.tr>)
c. Ayşe Künelgin (<http://kepenekkeramik.com.tr>)

